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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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Historic nominee in New Mexico
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A powerful story of friendship
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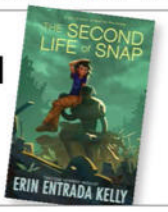

SPORTS
Softball title goes to Texas
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June 19, 2026 • Vol. 7, Issue 322 • $5.99

Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

TOY STORY IS BACK!

Woody, Buzz, and friends are returning for a new movie adventure p20

FACT FILE
Azteca Stadium in Mexico City will become the first venue to host matches for three World Cups: in 1970, 1986, and 2026.

Some matches will be played at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, California.

World Cup 2030

The next World Cup, in 2030, will mark the tournament's 100th anniversary. Morocco, Portugal, and Spain will host, and FIFA will also hold a celebration in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, where the first World Cup was staged in 1930. Matches will also be played in Uruguay, Argentina, and Paraguay.

World Cup tournament begins

When *The Week Junior* went to press on June 10, the FIFA World Cup was set to begin the next day. The international men's soccer tournament is the world's largest sporting event and takes place every four years. For the first time, it is being hosted by three countries: the US, Canada, and Mexico.

What is the World Cup?

The World Cup is run by FIFA, the organization that oversees soccer worldwide. There will be 48 teams competing this year—the most ever, with 16 more than in 2022. Each team represents a country and is made up of the best players from that nation, regardless of what team they play for during the regular season. For the first round, the teams are split into 12 groups of four teams. Each team plays each other once, and some will advance to the next round. There will be a record total of 104 matches at this World Cup.

Shakira

Where is it happening?

Matches will be played in 16 cities, including three in Mexico and two in Canada. In the US, which has not hosted a World Cup since 1994, matches will take place in 11 cities including Atlanta, Miami, Houston, Seattle, and the San Francisco area. In 2022, the tournament was held in the small nation of Qatar, where every stadium was within driving distance of the others. This time, the distances between venues—which are located as many as 2,800 miles and four time zones apart—will mean more travel than ever for players.

How are officials preparing?

Hundreds of thousands of soccer fans will attend the matches, and local officials near each venue have been working to ensure that the stadiums are ready and that public transportation, hotels, and businesses can handle the influx. The US government has provided $8.5 million for additional security in New Jersey, where matches, including the final, will be held. Because many fans will travel through New York City to get to New Jersey, city officials will close a main thoroughfare to all motor vehicles except buses on match days. In Kansas City, Missouri, a new transit system was built to transport hundreds of thousands of soccer fans, including free buses to the airport and stadium.

Public health officials have expressed concern that the arrival of so many international travelers could lead to the spread of diseases. In the US, officials will detect and track infectious diseases by monitoring social media and analyzing sewage and wastewater for traces of illness.

What are other concerns?

Temperatures during the World Cup could hit record highs, and many matches will be played outdoors or in venues without air conditioning. To protect players, staff, and fans, FIFA and health officials are calling for longer hydration breaks, cooling centers, and on-site medical staff. Many fans have also expressed shock over soaring ticket prices, including seats selling for up to $42,000 for the final match. New York and New Jersey officials said they are investigating whether FIFA artificially inflated prices and created a misleading purchase process. In addition, fans, team staff, referees, and journalists from more than a dozen countries, including many in Africa and the Middle East, have said they are facing problems obtaining visas (legal permission to enter a country) from the US government. And while each competing country is typically given a certain number of tickets, Iran said FIFA refused to provide its tickets to matches in the US due to the war between the two nations.

What will happen next?

After the first round with all 48 teams, the top two countries from each group—plus the top eight third-place finishers—will advance to knockout rounds. From there, teams that lose are eliminated until two finalists play for the title on July 19. That match will have the first-ever World Cup halftime show, featuring Madonna, Shakira, and BTS.

ON THE COVER: DISNEY/PIXAR; GETTY IMAGES; NCAA; COURTESY THE BOOK PUBLISHER

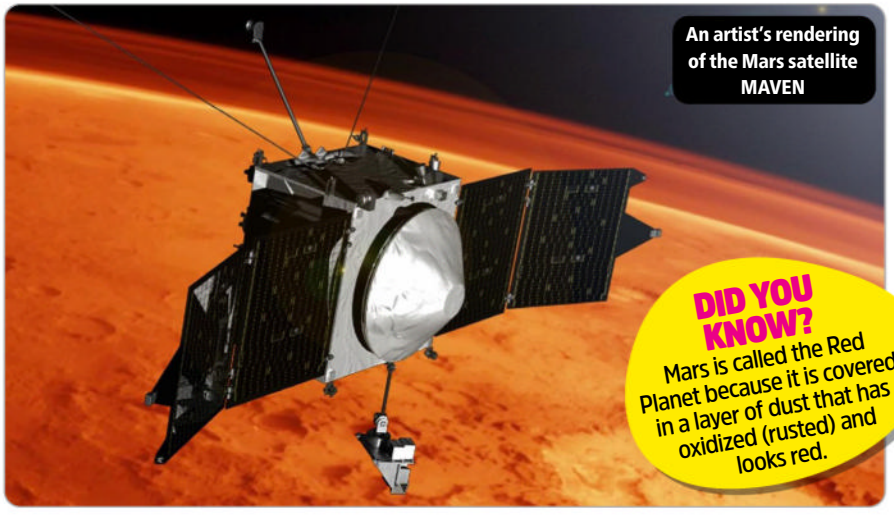
Earthquake in the Philippines

On June 8, a powerful earthquake struck the Philippines, an Asian country made up of thousands of islands in the Pacific Ocean. The quake had a magnitude (strength) of 7.8, making it one of the strongest to hit the country in the past 50 years. At least 37 people died, and more than 32,000 were displaced.

The Philippines is in an area known as the "Ring of Fire," where 90% of the world's earthquakes occur. The earthquake's epicenter (where it begins and is the strongest) was off the coast of Mindanao, which has the second-highest population of the country's islands. It caused hundreds of buildings to collapse, set off landslides, and created tsunami waves that reached Indonesia and Japan.

Many people gathered at emergency shelters, and the government was conducting search and rescue operations. Schools were closed, and people were advised not to return to damaged buildings and homes out of concern for aftershocks (small quakes after a bigger one).

Rescue workers in Mindanao



An artist's rendering of the Mars satellite MAVEN

DID YOU KNOW?
Mars is called the Red Planet because it is covered in a layer of dust that has oxidized (rusted) and looks red.

Farewell to MAVEN spacecraft

On June 3, NASA announced that its MAVEN (Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution) space satellite had stopped functioning. For more than 11 years, MAVEN orbited Mars, gathering information on the Red Planet's atmosphere. NASA lost contact with the satellite in December and recently determined that its battery had died.

MAVEN launched in 2013 from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on what was meant to be a one-year mission, and it orbited Mars about seven times a day. The solar-powered satellite, which is about the size of a small car, is equipped with instruments to gather data on the chemicals in the planet's atmosphere and send it back to Earth.

The data has been used in more than 800 scientific studies and helped scientists learn about changes to Mars' atmosphere and climate. It has also helped researchers assess the effect of solar winds and storms on Mars' atmosphere, discover light displays called auroras, and study how dust storms cause water loss on the planet. MAVEN was also one of five spacecraft that helped NASA communicate with rovers on Mars' surface.

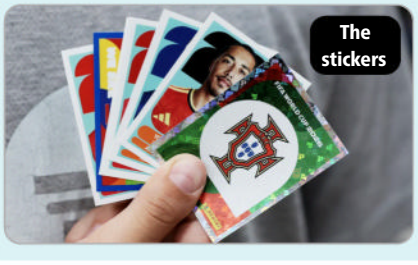
In December, MAVEN appeared to be working normally when it traveled behind Mars on its regular route. At some point, however, its orbit was disrupted, causing it to rotate faster than usual. This drained its batteries and shut down its communications system. NASA is still trying to determine what caused MAVEN to rotate too fast.

MAVEN will remain in Mars' orbit for 50 to 100 years before eventually dropping into the planet's atmosphere and burning up. Meanwhile, scientists will continue using the data it collected.

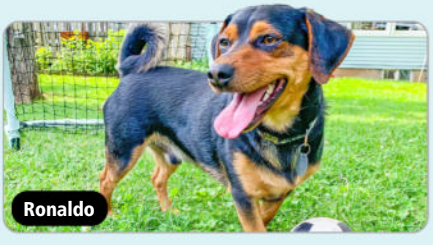
IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

SOCCER STICKERS

For decades, soccer fans around the world have been buying and trading Panini brand World Cup stickers. Now more US fans are joining the fun, snapping up blind packs with hopes of collecting all 980 stickers produced this year.



The stickers



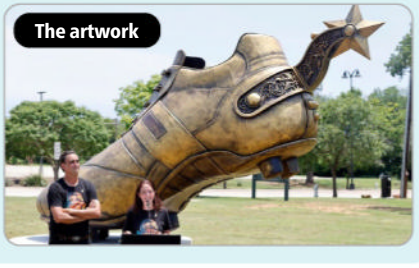
Ronaldo

A PLAYFUL PUP

When a Pennsylvania family named their dog Ronaldo—after soccer legend Cristiano Ronaldo—they had no idea he had a knack for the game. Now the Chihuahua–dachshund mix has gone viral for his love of soccer and his superior skills as a goalie. "He has a natural talent," his family said.

A SPECIAL SCULPTURE

Officials in Arlington, Texas, unveiled an 18-foot-long version of the Golden Boot trophy, which is given to the World Cup player who scores the most goals in the tournament. Called the Texan Golden Boot, the sculpture honors the state's hosting duties this year and is adorned with a spur, a Texas symbol.



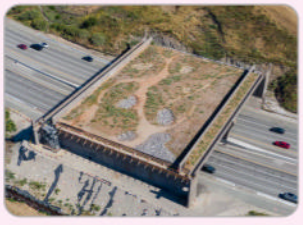
The artwork

NASA/GSFC; GETTY IMAGES (2); STEPHANIE GRAVEIRO KATZMAN; NORTH TEXAS FWC ORGANIZING COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); FIFA

FUN FACT
Mule deer get their name from their large, mule-like ears, which can rotate independently to help them pinpoint sounds.

A view of the crossing in Siskiyou County, California, and a mule deer (above)

World's largest crossing



When the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing (above), which spans the 101 Freeway in Agoura Hills, California, opens on December 2, it will be the world's largest animal crossing at about 250 feet long and 174 feet wide. It's named for Wallis Annenberg (1939–2025), who donated $1 million to the project.

Sign of success for wildlife bridge

Construction of the first wildlife crossing over a major highway in California is nearing completion. Some animals have already been observed using it, which state officials said is a hopeful sign for the project's success.

What is a wildlife bridge?

This type of bridge is a structure built over a human-made barrier, such as a highway, that allows animals to safely cross from one side to the other, expanding their habitat. These crossings are more common in other countries, such as Australia and Canada, but are starting to appear in the US. Without a bridge, animals may attempt to cross a road, threatening their survival. More than 1 million collisions between vehicles and wildlife take place each year in the US. Some of these collisions have also harmed people, causing serious injuries and some deaths.

What is the new bridge?

The crossing, which is about 100 feet long and 140 feet wide, spans an area of State Route 97, a two-lane highway in Siskiyou County in Northern California. About 50 deer and 16 elk died at the site of the crossing between 2015 and 2020, state data found. Construction on the $20 million bridge began in July 2025.

What animals used it?

In early June, a camera showed images of three mule deer using the structure for the first time. "It's nice to see all the hard work that everybody's put into this paying off," said Wesley Stroud, a manager with the California Department of Transportation. Stroud said that if the state builds these bridges "where the animals want to be, you're going to get usage." Gray wolves, bobcats, mountain lions, and black bears are also expected to use the bridge.

What will happen next?

Although the bridge is complete, workers are adding 8-foot-high fencing along the highway to help direct animals toward the crossing. This is expected to be finished in the fall. Other crossings, including a $114 million project (see box above) and smaller ones, are also underway in California.

WORD OF THE WEEK

SOCCER

In the UK in the 1800s, there were two games known as football—"rugby football" and "association football." Rugby football was later shortened to "rugby," while "soccer" became slang for "association football," with the "soc" borrowed from the middle of "association."

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

June 20, 1782
Great Seal of the US approved

On June 20, 1782, lawmakers approved the Great Seal of the United States, which is still used on official documents and paper money. The seal depicts a bald eagle with arrows (a symbol of war) in one talon and an olive branch (a symbol of peace) in the other. The stars represent the 13 original colonies. The national motto, "e pluribus unum" ("out of many, one"), also appears on the seal.

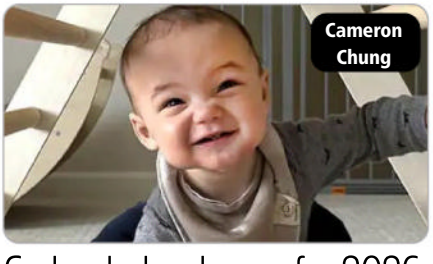
The seal

New Mexico governor's race set

Deb Haaland has been chosen as the Democratic nominee for governor of New Mexico, after defeating attorney Sam Bregman in a primary on June 2. In 2021, Haaland made history when she became the first Native American to serve as a US Cabinet secretary, leading the Department of the Interior until 2025. If elected, she would be the first female Native American to lead a US state as governor. She will face Republican Gregg Hull on November 3.

Top theater prizes awarded

The 79th annual Tony Awards were presented at Radio City Music Hall in New York City on June 7. *Schmigadoon!*, about a magical town, won for best musical, while *Liberation*, about the women's movement, won for best play. *Ragtime*, set at the turn of the 20th century, won for best musical revival. The revival of *Death of a Salesman*, a play by Arthur Miller, won the most awards with six.



Gerber baby chosen for 2026

Cameron Chung, a 10-month-old from Minnesota, has been named the winner of the 2026 Gerber Photo Search. Gerber is a baby food company that has sponsored the contest since 2010. Cameron, whose parents call him a "ray of sunshine," was chosen from more than 100,000 entries. He won a $50,000 prize and will appear in media campaigns.

RED TREATS
Red food and drinks are often part of Juneteenth celebrations because red represents the strength of Black Americans after enduring centuries of hardships.

Juneteenth celebrations are underway

On June 19, the US will celebrate Juneteenth, a holiday that marks the end of slavery and recognizes Black history, culture, and achievements. Juneteenth is considered the oldest holiday celebrating Black Americans.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared all enslaved people in the US free. But the Confederacy—a group of Southern states that fought against the US during the Civil War (1861–1865)—resisted the order. The Civil War effectively ended on April 9, 1865, when General Robert E. Lee, the Confederate leader, surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant, the Union Army leader. But it wasn't until June 19 that US troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to ensure the release of all enslaved people. The date eventually became known as Juneteenth.

Civil rights activist Opal Lee

For many years, Juneteenth was primarily celebrated within Black communities. In 2021, President Joe Biden signed legislation making Juneteenth a federal holiday. Many businesses and schools are closed, and communities mark the occasion with parades, festivals, and concerts.

In Houston, Texas, celebrations for Juneteenth began on June 1 and will run through June 20. Activities include a historic bus tour. On June 13, the Juneteenth Half Marathon will take place in Washington, DC, and will conclude with a barbecue. Also in Washington, DC, the National Museum of African American History and Culture will celebrate the upcoming 100th birthday of Opal Lee, the activist who helped make Juneteenth a federal holiday. The event on June 19 will include a cooking demonstration of Lee's favorite Juneteenth dishes.

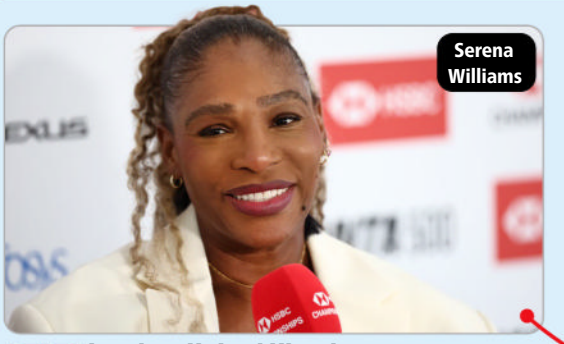
The Juneteenth Atlanta Parade in Georgia, one of the nation's largest gatherings for the holiday, will include music and a market featuring Black-owned businesses. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Juneteenth Festival is scheduled for June 20 and will include historical reenactments and other activities.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Loose chicken flees animal control, takes a dip in pool" *UPI*

GETTY IMAGES (5); RACHAEL OLSON & ALDEN CHUNG; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES; (4); UC DAVIS ROAD ECOLOGY CENTER

Around the world


Serena Williams

London, United Kingdom
Tennis superstar makes a comeback

After nearly four years away from professional tennis, Serena Williams, age 44, returned to the sport. At the Queen's Club Championships in London, held June 8–14, she and Victoria Mboko, age 19 and from Canada, won their opening doubles match. Williams, winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles and a mother of two, said, "It's summer, the kids aren't in school, so it's a perfect time to get out there, have fun, and see what happens."

Pottery found at the site

France
Ancient objects found at Notre-Dame

Archaeologists conducting a dig at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris have uncovered hundreds of ancient objects, including a 4th-century coin and pottery from the medieval period. Officials had planned to plant trees in front of the cathedral, which was heavily damaged in a fire in 2019. But first, they had to excavate the land to ensure they wouldn't harm anything underneath. The items will be sent to an archaeology lab for further study.

A protest in the city square

Mexico City, Mexico
Teachers go on strike

Thousands of teachers went on strike (refusing to work as a form of protest) in Mexico City, days before it was set to host the first match of the World Cup on June 11. Protesters in the city's main square pulled down statues of soccer stars, burned soccer balls, and blocked roads. The teachers want better pay and said they will continue to strike unless the government finds a solution.

Rome, Italy
Italy celebrates anniversary

Italy observed its traditional Republic Day on June 2, with this year's celebrations marking 80 years since the country voted to replace the monarchy with a republic. This is when the head of state is an elected politician, rather than a king or queen. Events held around Rome included military parades, an air force flyover, and concerts.

A patriotic flyover

Democratic Republic of Congo
Updates on Ebola

The World Health Organization announced on June 2 that the number of suspected cases of Ebola (a serious viral disease) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was lower than had been initially reported. The number of confirmed cases, however, is still rising. When *The Week Junior* went to press, that number was 550, and 101 people had died. Health workers are mobilizing to contain the outbreak.

Health workers in DRC

JEANNE PETITBON / CITY OF PARIS; GETTY IMAGES (2); REUTERS (2); UN NEWS; ALAMY (2); SHUTTERSTOCK (2)

Members of the new government

Denmark
New government forms

After months of discussion, Mette Frederiksen will return for a third term as Denmark's prime minister. In the general election in March, her Social Democrats party won the most votes with 22%, but that wasn't enough to rule alone. She is returning by creating a coalition government, meaning she will run Denmark with other parties.

After the UN election

Kyrgyzstan
Country joins Security Council

On June 3, Kyrgyzstan, a mountainous country in Central Asia, was elected for the first time in its history to the United Nations (UN) Security Council. The UN is a group of 193 nations working together, and the main job of the Security Council is maintaining international peace and security. Kyrgyzstan's seat on the council will be temporary, starting on January 1, 2027, and lasting for two years.

Kim Jong-un (left) and Xi Jinping

North Korea
A rare state visit

Chinese president Xi Jinping has made his first official visit to North Korea in seven years. He was welcomed by North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un with a military band, acrobatic performances, and children waving flags. North Korea depends on China for trade, including essential imports of food and fuel. Experts say the visit shows the nations' united front against the West and allows China to increase its influence over North Korea.

The robots

Taiwan
Robot dogs revealed

Four-legged robots could soon be used on the islands that make up Taiwan. A company unveiled three types of "robot dogs" that carry tracking technology. Taiwan's government hasn't bought any yet, but the robots might be used to patrol areas in the South China Sea. Taiwan has boosted its armed forces as China pressures the self-governing country, saying it is China's territory.

New South Wales, Australia
Volunteers count dolphins

Hundreds of people have taken part in the first-ever dolphin census in New South Wales. Volunteers who took a one-hour training session observed the ocean for a minimum of 15 minutes from cliffs and coastal overlooks, while others used drones and boats to count every dolphin they saw. The information gathered will be used to track local dolphin populations and to check how healthy they are.

A pod of dolphins

Should we stop remaking movies?

Some people say new versions are unnecessary, but others enjoy them.

What you need to know

- **The first movie made with a "motion picture" camera was a 2.11-second short film called *Roundhay Garden Scene*, in 1888.**
- **An 1896 movie called *Playing Cards* became the first known remake when a filmmaker created a new version of it the same year.**
- **Many movies made in the US are remakes of foreign films.**
- **Filmmakers sometimes adapt source material, like a book or play, that already has a movie version.**

TAKE TWO
The 2019 live-action version of Disney's *The Lion King* made more than any other remake, earning $1.7 billion.

From *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* to *Freaky Friday* and *The Little Mermaid*, many hit children's movies have been remade over the years. Some animated films, like *101 Dalmatians*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, and *Moana*, have been reimagined as live-action movies, while the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series started out with real actors before being re-created in animated form. For some filmmakers, putting their own twist on a classic is an exciting creative endeavor, and many fans enjoy seeing old favorites in new ways. Yet other people say new movies should have original ideas and tell modern stories. What do you think? Should we stop remaking movies?

Yes—fresh ideas are better

Older movies should be left alone out of respect for the talent, creativity, and hard work that went into making them. Remaking movies just disregards all that effort and the vision of the original filmmakers. Plus, it's hard for a new version to live up to an original, especially if the first film is a classic or it's one that people have fond memories of watching. A movie should be evaluated on its own terms rather than always being compared to its original material. Besides, there are so many new ideas and stories worth telling. They will be more timely and current and can address modern events and ideas.

No—remakes have value

As long as people want to see remakes of old movies, let them! It's fun for new generations of moviegoers to see a classic film reimagined, and it's thrilling for parents to show their kids a new take on a film they loved. Besides, two filmmakers can have very different approaches to telling the same story, especially if they're both adapting it from an original source, like a book. No one says theater companies should stop performing new versions of Shakespeare plays, right? Remakes can also update classic stories so today's viewers can relate to them. That will help older stories find new audiences that might not otherwise see them.

YES Three reasons we should stop remaking movies

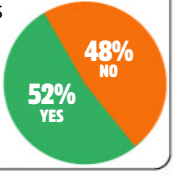
1. **Remaking a movie disrespects the effort that went into making it and the creative vision of the filmmaker.**
2. **Remakes often aren't as good or popular, especially if the original was a hit.**
3. **There are so many new ideas out there. We should focus on telling new stories instead of retelling old ones.**

NO Three reasons we should not stop remaking movies

1. **It's fun to see an old film reimagined and for parents to share remakes of their favorite movies with their kids.**
2. **Two different filmmakers will produce very different versions of a movie, which is creatively interesting.**
3. **Remakes can freshen up older stories and open them up to entirely new audiences.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if jaywalking should be allowed. Your votes showed that you see both sides of the issue: 52% of you said yes, and 48% said no.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think we should stop remaking movies or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

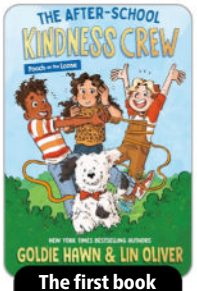
ALAMY

Encouraging empathy

Goldie Hawn's new children's books are focused on mental health.

Actress Goldie Hawn is known for her many comedic roles. Now she's also a children's book author with a new series, *The After-School Kindness Crew*, co-written with Lin Oliver. It was inspired by her decades of work as a children's mental health advocate.

Hawn grew up in Maryland and began taking dance lessons at age 3. She studied drama at American University and worked as a dancer before moving into acting. Her breakthrough role was on the sketch comedy show *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In* (1968–1970). She made her film debut in *Cactus Flower* (1969), winning an Academy Award for best supporting actress. She later starred in popular films such as *Private Benjamin* (1980). Her more recent appearances include playing Mrs. Claus in *The Christmas Chronicles* on Netflix (2018) .



The first book in the new series

In 2003, she launched the Goldie Hawn Foundation and its MindUP program. The science-based curriculum uses tools like "brain breaks" to help children manage stress and increase focus. MindUP has reached millions of students in 48 countries around the world.

This work eventually led Hawn to write *The After-School Kindness Crew*, which follows three fourth-graders who use mindfulness tools to solve problems. In the first book in the series, *Pooch on the Loose*, the crew helps find a lost shelter dog. The second book, *Slam Dunk Day*, is set to be released in November.

Hawn said the books incorporate ideas from MindUP into fiction without making them feel like a lesson. Speaking to *People* about the book series, she said her goal was simple: "We have to have fun."

Goldie Hawn

WOW! Goldie Hawn danced the cancan in the Texas Pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair.

Back onto the field

Cristo Fernández is an actor best known for playing the joyful soccer star Dani Rojas on *Ted Lasso,* the popular TV show (rated TV-MA) about an American football coach leading a British soccer team. Now Fernández is becoming a real-life soccer player, after signing with El Paso Locomotive FC in Texas. It won't be his first time on the field. Prior to acting, Fernández played professional youth soccer in Mexico until age 15, when a knee injury ended his run. "The dream of competing professionally never truly left my heart," he said.

Cristo Fernández

James Patterson

A major literacy gift

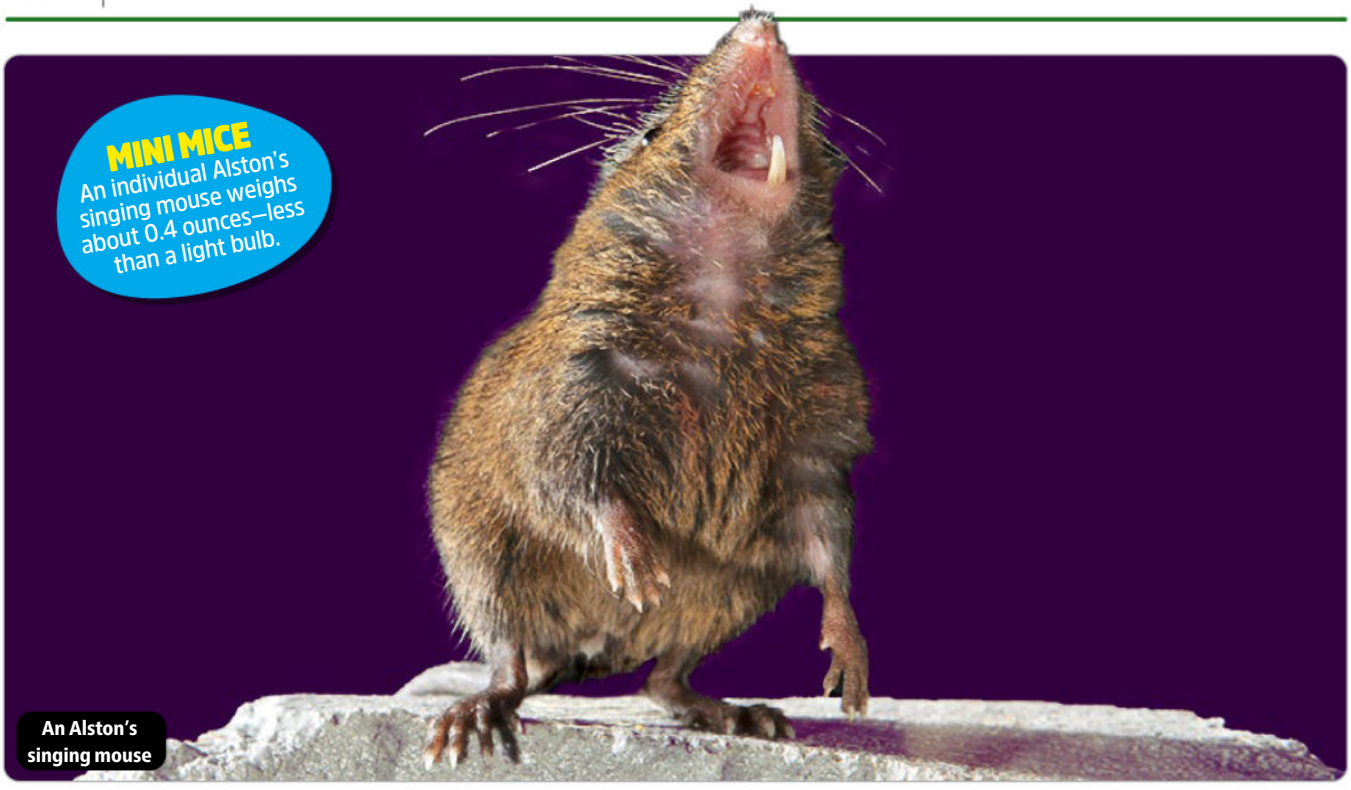
Best-selling author James Patterson has committed $10 million to create the Patterson Institute of Early Adolescent Literacy at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. It will enhance reading and writing skills for students in grades 4–8 by providing funds for research, tutoring, and teacher training. Patterson, who attended graduate school at Vanderbilt, is best known for his books for adults and has written popular series for kids, such as *Middle School.* He has sold more than 425 million books worldwide. "Literacy is the bedrock of a functioning society," Patterson said of his donation.

OVERHEARD

"You have to have delusional amounts of belief and faith to dream beyond your wildest dreams."

Hip-hop icon and actress Queen Latifah during her commencement address to the graduating class at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

GETTY IMAGES (4); BOOK: COURTESY OF PUBLISHER

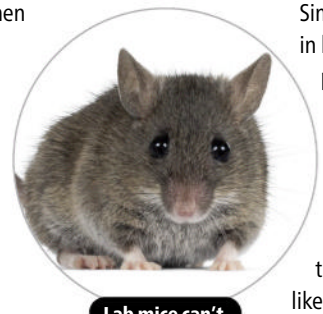


An Alston's singing mouse

How singing mice produce a tune

As its name suggests, the Alston's singing mouse is known for its unusual, trilling vocalizations. The bird-like songs can last up to 16 seconds and are much more complex than other rodents' calls. Two new studies have helped experts determine where these mice get their musical talent.

In one study, an international team of researchers examined the mouse's larynx (voice box). They found that when air passed through the voice box, it inflated a sac called the ventral pouch and produced a whistle-like sound. If they blocked the pathway so no air could reach the pouch, the sound stopped. A muscle called the cricothyroid muscle changed the shape of the voice box to control the song's pitch, making it sound higher or lower.



Lab mice can't sing…yet.

Another study involved mapping the mouse's brain. Alston's singing mice sometimes sing a sort of duet, rapidly singing back and forth to each other. Scientists say this behavior is similar to the way humans take turns in spoken conversations.

To better understand how they gained this ability, scientists from the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York compared the brains of singing mice to those of regular lab mice. They found that although the brains of the two animals are nearly identical, singing mice have more brain cells in certain areas. Those parts of the brain are associated with hearing, vocalizing, and controlling mouth movements.

Similar brain regions are involved in human speech. Because of this parallel, the researchers believe that singing in mice may have evolved (changed very slowly over time) in the same way that speech evolved in humans. It also suggests that the development of abilities like speech may be simpler than researchers previously believed. This opens up new possibilities for science.

"If only a few specific wiring changes separate singing mice from lab mice, we might be able to engineer those changes ourselves," said Anthony Zador, one of the scientists involved in the brain research. He wondered, "Could we make a lab mouse sing?"

Rats have tickle preferences

Scientists sometimes tickle rats because the rodents seem to enjoy it, letting out high-pitched giggles. Playful tickling can help rats bond with their handlers and become less fearful. A new study found that female and male rats prefer different kinds of tickling.

The study tested two techniques. In one, a researcher held a rat on its back while tickling its belly. In the other, gentler version, rats were free to play chase with the researcher's hands between tickles. Male rats showed no preference between the two methods, while female rats preferred the gentler technique. This difference lines up with the ways young rats naturally play with each other, since male rats tend to play more roughly than females do.

DEEP DISGUISE
The hairy ghost pipefish's hair-like filaments help it blend in with red algae drifting through the water.

Solenostomus snuffleupagus

Finding the Snuffleupagus fish

What does Mr. Snuffleupagus from the TV show *Sesame Street* have in common with a fish? Quite a bit, it turns out. Scientists have discovered a species that looks eerily similar to the beloved Muppet.

In the early 2000s, marine biologist David Harasti was swimming in coral-studded waters near Papua New Guinea when he spotted a creature unlike any he had seen before. Less than two inches long, it had a trunk-like snout and shaggy orange "hair." Like Mr. Snuffleupagus, it was also extremely elusive. Harasti spent nearly 20 years trying to find the animal again so he could study it. He and a colleague finally caught two of these fish, a male and a female, at Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

Scientific analysis confirmed his hunch: It was a new type of ghost pipefish, a cousin of the seahorse. The makers of *Sesame Street* gave their approval to name it Solenostomus snuffleupagus, also known as the hairy ghost pipefish. Rosemarie Truglio of Sesame Workshop said, "This charming new species is a wonderful reminder that there is still so much to explore and learn about the world."

Animal of the week: Oncilla

A rare version of this small wildcat was observed in the Andes Mountains for the first time. Most oncillas, also known as tigrillos, have a spotted coat. An oncilla with all-black fur had never been seen outside one national park in Colombia.

- **LIFESPAN:** About 17 years
- **HABITAT:** Forests in Central and South America
- **SIZE:** About 15 to 23 inches long
- **DIET:** Small mammals, lizards, and birds
- **FUN FACT:** Their ankles can rotate 180 degrees backward for exceptional tree-climbing flexibility.

Good week / Bad week

Khulans

The khulan (Asiatic wild ass) is rebounding in eastern Mongolia after being absent for about 65 years. The population has grown since efforts were made to reduce hunting and expand parks and reserves, giving khulans safer places to roam.

Timor green pigeons

Based on new research, experts warn that the Timor green pigeon could go extinct unless urgent action is taken. The birds, which eat fruit from trees, are disappearing due to hunting, deforestation, and the loss of their habitats.

Ask an expert: "Are chickens really related to dinosaurs?" Caroline, 11, Maryland

Eli Strull
Curator of education and guest experience, WNC Nature Center

Dinosaurs were reptiles, and all birds descended from reptiles. Research on a T. rex fossil showed that its proteins and genome (complete set of chemicals that carry instructions for how a living thing develops) were most similar to a chicken's, even compared to some modern-day reptiles.

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about the WNC Nature Center at wildwnc.org.

DARREN RICE; GETTY IMAGES (2); JAMES EATON/BIRDTOUR ASIA; ON LEFT PAGE: CHRISTOPHER ALGER-DOMINGUEZ; GETTY IMAGES (2)

A volcanic eruption

A blast in 1980 is considered the most destructive volcanic event in the US.

Mount St. Helens is a volcano in the Pacific Northwest that became known for its massive explosion more than 40 years ago.

Its location in Washington

What is Mount St. Helens?

Located in Washington state, Mount St. Helens is an active volcano with an elevation of 8,363 feet. It is a composite volcano—cone-shaped with steep sides and made of layers of lava, ash, and rock. In 1792, a European explorer named it after the British ambassador to Spain, whose title was Baron St. Helens. The volcano has erupted more than 40 times in its 300,000-year history.

The eruption on May 18, 1980

A cataclysmic explosion

Mount St. Helens is most famous for its eruption in 1980. The rumblings began in mid-March. Two months later, at 8:28 a.m. on May 18, a 5.1-magnitude earthquake struck, sending ash and smoke 80,000 feet into the sky and triggering a massive landslide. The eruption was so powerful that it It blew away the volcanic cone at the top and left a horseshoe-shaped crater, reducing the 9,677-foot peak's height by about 1,300 feet. The eruption lasted nine hours, spread 200 square miles, and claimed the lives of 57 people. It also killed millions of animals and destroyed about 10 million trees. Since then, Mount St. Helens has had periods of minor activity. The most recent was in 2008.

DID YOU KNOW?
The Native American name for Mount St. Helens is *lawilátla* ("one from whom smoke comes").

Before and after: Mount St. Helens as it appeared in 1973 (above) and after the famous eruption in 1980 (right)

GETTY IMAGES

made history

The crater

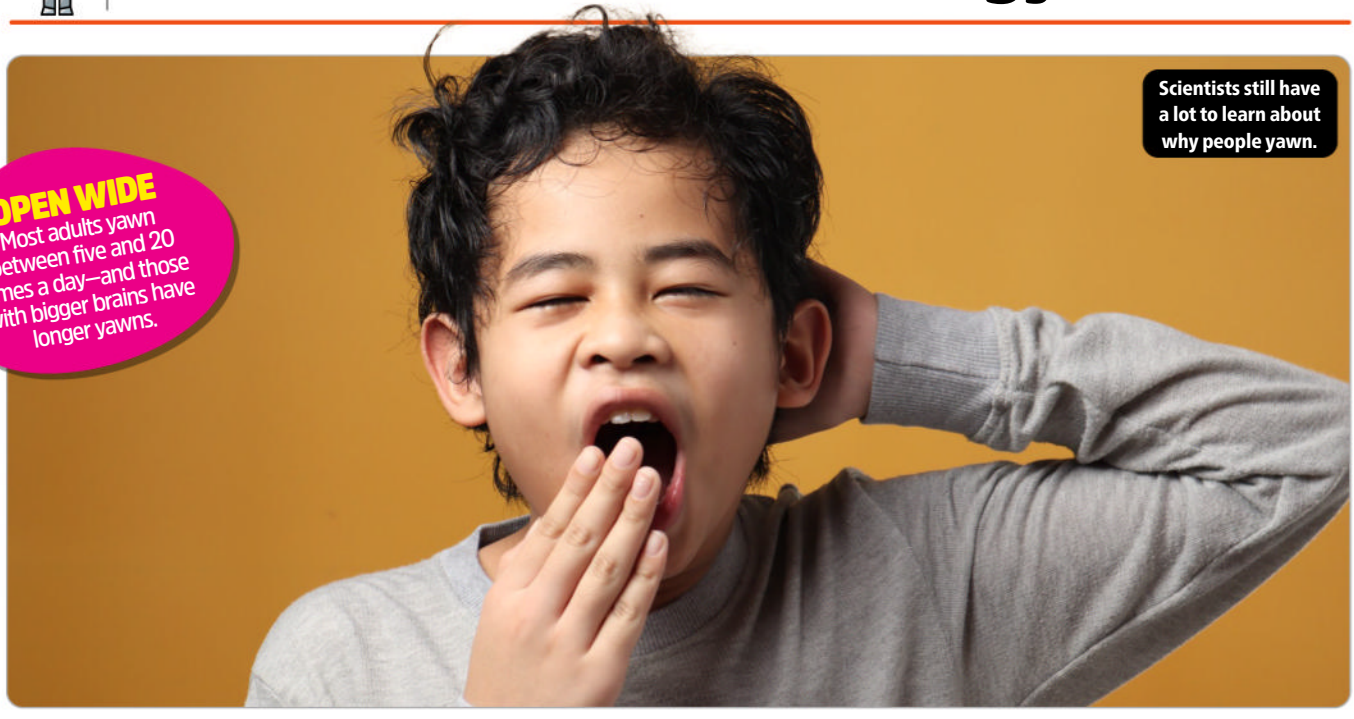
A national monument

In 1982, Mount St. Helens was declared a national monument. It covers about 110,000 acres as part of the larger Gifford Pinchot National Forest. When it's open, the Johnston Ridge Observatory, which is about five miles from the volcano, offers views of the crater, lava dome, and aftermath of the landslide. The park also features the longest continuous lava tube (underground passageways carved by lava) in the contiguous US. Visitors can observe dead trees as well as old-growth forests that survived the eruption and see the plants and animals that have made a rebound in the area since 1980.

A bull elk

A healing landscape

The monument has become a research zone for scientists studying how the ecosystem has recovered over the years. They discovered that areas left to recover with no human intervention did better. Roosevelt elk and Columbia black-tailed deer are among the mammals that have moved in from nearby and made a home here. Others include mountain goats, American beavers, deer mice, and Northern pocket gophers. In the absence of many predators, western toads thrive along the shores of lakes and ponds. Several species of birds, such as the yellow warbler and willow flycatcher, as well as fish species such as rainbow trout also live there. Plants such as prairie lupine, known for its purple flowers, helped the volcanic soil recover. The soil is also a friend to an edible treat: wild strawberries.



OPEN WIDE
Most adults yawn between five and 20 times a day—and those with bigger brains have longer yawns.

Scientists still have a lot to learn about why people yawn.

Yawning is good for the brain

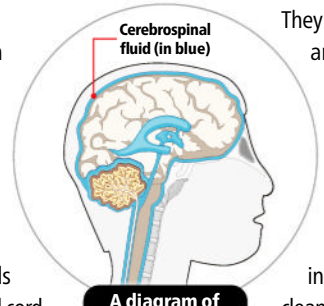
You might see yawning as a sign of being tired or bored, but scientists recently discovered it may help people keep their brains healthy. The study could improve understanding of conditions such as migraine headaches.

All humans—and many animals—yawn, but scientists have never fully understood why. Some have theorized that yawning helps the body balance its oxygen levels or signals tiredness to others. Researchers from the University of New South Wales in Australia used MRI scans to see what happens inside people's bodies when they yawn.

Their findings suggested that yawning changes the movement of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), a clear liquid that surrounds and protects the brain and spinal cord. CSF has several important jobs, including delivering nutrients, removing waste, and helping the brain's temperature and pressure stay steady.

The researchers scanned the heads and necks of 22 healthy volunteers while they yawned, breathed normally, took deep breaths, and tried to stifle yawns. Participants were encouraged to yawn by watching video clips of other people yawning—called "contagious yawning" (see box at right). The team measured only contagious yawning, not "spontaneous yawning" (yawning independently of others). Because yawning and deep breathing seem to work the same way, the team expected them to produce similar results. Instead, the researchers found that deep breaths move CSF toward the brain, while yawns send it in the opposite direction.

"We definitely didn't expect that," Adam Martinac, a study author, told *New Scientist*. They also found that deep breaths and yawns push more blood away from the brain, making room for fresh blood to enter. Yawning, however, doesn't change the direction of blood flow, like it does with CSF.

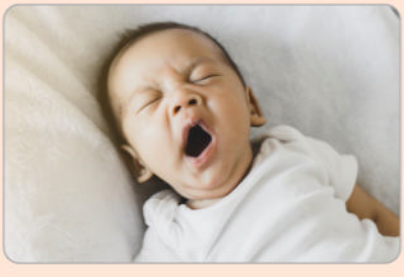


A diagram of the human brain

Together, the findings could indicate that yawning helps to clean out waste products or cool the brain, the scientists said. They also discovered that stifled yawns (when people start to yawn but stop themselves) last almost as long as regular yawns. Once a yawn begins, it's difficult to stop it. And every person has a unique yawn style, which supports the idea that yawning is an involuntary movement (one that we can't control).

"It's almost like a fingerprint," Martinac said. "You could possibly identify someone just based on how they yawn."

What are "contagious yawns"?



If you've ever yawned because you saw or heard someone else do it, you experienced a common phenomenon called "contagious yawning." According to a new study, babies in the womb may experience it as well. The study's authors discovered that when pregnant women yawn, their fetuses are more likely to yawn too.

Scientists are still unsure why contagious yawning occurs, but many think it's a type of "social mirroring." That is when people copy the actions of those around them subconsciously (without thinking), which likely strengthens social bonds. The authors of the new study think fetuses and mothers are probably sharing a physical experience, but the fetus could also be developing behavioral and social skills in the womb.

Scientists study uses of dinosaur wings

Some early dinosaurs had wings but didn't fly. For many years, scientists have wondered why. Now a team has a theory for what the wings could have been used for: luring prey out into the open. The findings offer insight into the behavior of long-extinct animals.

Piotr Jablonski, a scientist who studies birds, noticed that some modern species fan out their wings or tail feathers to flush insects out of their resting spots. Then the birds catch the bugs and eat them. Jablonski thought winged dinosaurs, which were the ancestors of birds, may have done the same.

EARLY BIRD
Caudipteryx, which was first discovered in China in 1997, lived about 125 million years ago and had wings and a feathered tail.

To test the theory, he and his colleagues created a robotic version of a turkey-sized winged dinosaur called Caudipteryx, which they named Robopteryx. They gave it arms and detachable wings, then tested it in an area with grasshoppers, with and without its wings on. The insects were flushed out more often when the robot had wings rather than arms alone.

To see how insects would react to a broader range of wing movements, the team created an animated version of the Caudipteryx and tested it on locusts. Like the grasshoppers, the locusts reacted more strongly to the dinosaur when it used its wings.

The study does not conclusively prove that the dinosaurs used their wings to lure prey. They could have also used them for other purposes, like attracting potential mates.

An artist's rendering of Caudipteryx

Violinists wearing the exoskeletons

Wearable robots improve coordination

Scientists have developed a robotic exoskeleton that uses haptic feedback, which creates a sense of touch, so people can feel each other's movements. The wearable device could help when someone needs to copy someone else's movements, as with music lessons or sports training.

To test the exoskeletons, pairs of violinists wore them while playing music together. Typically they would coordinate their movements using sight and hearing. For the study, however, they could sometimes see each other, sometimes hear each other, or both. They could feel each other's movements but were not told that's what they were feeling.

When the musicians moved differently from each other, haptic feedback redirected their bodies, and their arm and bow movements became precisely synchronized. They were most coordinated when they could see, hear, and feel each other.

The exoskeletons could also be used for other purposes, like sports training or in physical therapy.

AMAZING INVENTION

A bag that calms people down

The Pulse Pack

A new wearable bag is designed to draw people's attention to their own heart rate when they're stressed and help them feel calmer. The Pulse Pack fits over the wrist and measures how fast the wearer's heart is beating. The bag generates its own pulses at about half the speed of the measured heart rate.

The company that makes the Pulse Pack said the wearer's heart rate will slow down to match the bag's. This will draw their attention away from whatever is causing them stress, helping to settle their emotions.

ON RIGHT PAGE: ALAMY; DARIO BARBANI; KONEL; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

Photos of the week

Better together
New South Wales Blues teammates celebrate at a rugby match in Australia.

Ready to go
Danish driver Alba Larsen prepares to race in Canada.

Major moment
In the UK, Arsenal players celebrate winning the English Premier League title.

GETTY IMAGES (6)

Photos of the week

Eyes on the prize
Canadian tennis player Victoria Mboko competes in the French Open.

Successful steal
At a game in California, Fernando Tatis Jr. of the San Diego Padres slides under Bryson Stott of the Philadelphia Phillies.

Full swing
Jasmine Koo of USC competes at the NCAA Women's Golf Championship in California.

HISTORIC VICTORY
A softball team from John F. Kennedy College in Wahoo, Nebraska, won the first Women's College World Series in 1969.

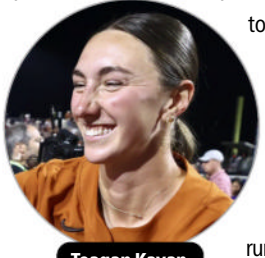
The University of Texas team

Texas wins Women's College World Series

The nation's top college softball teams gathered at Devon Park in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, from May 28 to June 4 for the Women's College World Series (WCWS). The final, which is a best-of-three series, featured a rematch between the two teams that competed for the championship last year: top-seeded (ranked) University of Texas and third-seeded Texas Tech. Texas won in a two-game sweep to claim their second straight national title.

The Division I NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) softball championship tournament began with 64 teams. After two rounds of regional competitions, eight teams advanced to the WCWS. The tournament has a double-elimination format, so teams are knocked out if they lose twice. Both Texas and Texas Tech suffered losses early in the WCWS, but they battled through the losers' bracket to reach the championship series.

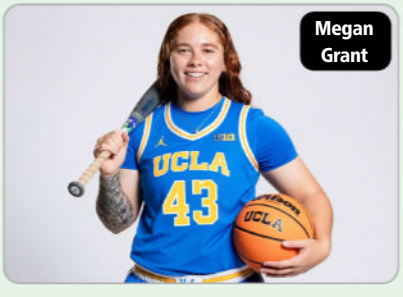
Texas entered the final hoping to defend their national title, while Texas Tech was seeking their first softball championship in their college's history. On June 3, Texas won Game 1, 7–3. Texas Tech scored in the top of the first inning, but Texas answered with five runs in the bottom of the inning and never looked back. Stars of the game included Texas pitcher Teagan Kavan, who threw for all seven innings, and her teammates Ashton Maloney, Viviana Martinez, and Katie Stewart, who drove in two runs each.


Teagan Kavan

The next night, Texas clinched the title with a 4–1 win. Texas Tech scored the game's opening run in the bottom of the third, but Texas took the lead in the top of the fifth after a defensive miscue by Texas Tech allowed two runners to score. Texas added to their lead in the top of the seventh. Stewart homered, then Leighann Goode singled to drive in the team's fourth run. Kavan pitched the final two innings, preventing a single opponent from reaching base and striking out five batters.

She was named WCWS Most Outstanding Player for the second year in a row. No other player has ever earned the honor in consecutive seasons. Across 33⅓ innings, she had a 1.47 ERA (earned run average, the average number of runs a pitcher allows per seven innings), 30 strikeouts, and three walks. Over her seven appearances in the tournament, she had four wins and two saves.

A multi-sport standout



Megan Grant

One top player who competed in the 2026 Women's College World Series was UCLA senior Megan Grant. This season, she hit 42 home runs, breaking the NCAA single-season record that had stood for more than 30 years. She finished her college career with 91 homers, which is now the UCLA softball record.

Although Grant is a softball star, her first love in sports was basketball. As a senior, she was able to fulfill a dream of playing for UCLA's team. She appeared in 14 games for the eventual national champions.

She now plays pro softball for the Portland Cascade in the Athletes Unlimited Softball League, which began its season on June 9.

FUN FACT The French Open has a staff member whose job is to look after players' dogs.

First-time champs at French Open

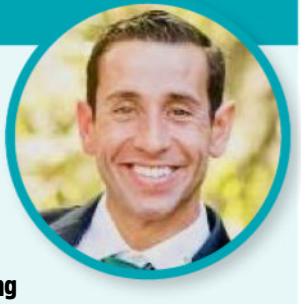
From May 24 to June 7, the 2026 French Open took place at Roland-Garros Stadium in Paris, France. It is one of the four most important tennis tournaments, which are known as Grand Slams.

Last year's men's singles champion, Carlos Alcaraz of Spain, skipped the event due to injury, and the defending women's singles champion, Coco Gauff of the US, was one of several top players who lost in upsets this year. As a result, no former French Open or Grand Slam champions made the singles semifinals. In the end, the men's champion was Alexander Zverev of Germany, and the women's champion was Mirra Andreeva of Russia. At age 19, she is the French Open's youngest women's singles winner since 1992.

In the women's final on June 6, Andreeva, who was seeded (ranked) eighth, beat unseeded Polish player Maja Chwalinska, 6–3, 6–2. Chwalinska had to win qualifying matches to make the main event and is only the second qualifier to reach a Grand Slam final in the Open Era (since1968). After the match, Andreeva posed with her trophy and her coach's dog, Luna.

The men's final the next day was a tight battle between Zverev, the two seed, and Italy's Flavio Cobolli, the10 seed. It was Cobolli's first major final, while Zverev was trying to win a Grand Slam after losing in three past finals. Zverev won the first set, 6–1, and Cobolli took the second, 6–4. Zverev claimed the third, 6–4, and Cobolli won the fourth, 7–6, in a tiebreak. That forced a deciding fifth set, which Zverev dominated and won, 6–1. He later celebrated on the court with his dachshund, Mishka.

COACH OF THE WEEK



Coach's Name: **Jon Greco**

Team: **San Mateo Aquatics Club 12U (water polo)**

"Coach Jon is such a great guy. He's not just a fantastic coach, he's also really kind and supportive as a person. During practice, he's patient and always encourages us to keep going, even when we make mistakes. He's always going above and beyond for the team. When we're not in the water, he often makes hilarious jokes. Sometimes, he even surprises us with pizza! I've learned and improved so much because of him." Daniel, 12, California

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

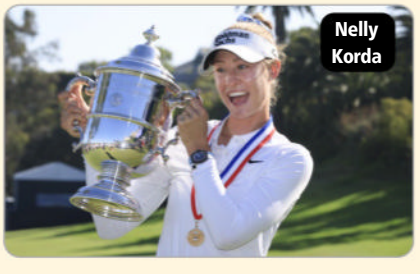
MORE BIG MOMENTS

BASKETBALL

In WNBA action on June 4, the Minnesota Lynx defeated the Golden State Valkyries, 87–84. During the game, Lynx rookie Olivia Miles scored a career-high 28 points. She hit eight 3-point shots, which set a new WNBA record for a rookie. The win was the Lynx's sixth victory in a row.

BASEBALL

New York Mets rookie Carson Benge had five hits in five at-bats during his team's 7–3 win over the San Diego Padres on June 7. Benge's hits included his seventh home run of the season and a triple. He is the first Mets rookie to get at least five hits in a game since Pete Alonso did it in 2019.



GOLF

US star Nelly Korda won the US Women's Open, one of the five major championships in women's golf, on June 7. This is her fourth major title and her first US Women's Open win. She won by one stroke, sealing her victory with a putt on the 18th hole. Korda is currently the world's top-ranked women's golfer.

GETTY IMAGES (5); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); UCLA ATHLETICS

Toy Story 5

A new *Toy Story* adventure

Woody, Buzz, Jessie, and their friends are back for the franchise's fifth film.

Since the first *Toy Story* film premiered in 1995, Disney-Pixar's beloved franchise has charmed audiences with its stories about friendship and growing up, all told through a group of toys that come to life when humans aren't around. Now Woody, Buzz Lightyear, Jessie, and the rest of the characters are returning for a new adventure in *Toy Story 5*. It arrives in theaters on June 19.

The new story takes place several years after the events of *Toy Story 4*. The toys belong to Bonnie, a young girl who received them from their longtime owner, Andy. In the new film, former toy leader Woody is off helping lost toys find new homes, so cowgirl doll Jessie is in charge. Some of the challenges she faces are helping Bonnie make friends and figuring out how the toys still fit into Bonnie's life after she starts using technology like her Lilypad tablet.

Jessie

Toy Story 5 was co-written and co-directed by Andrew Stanton, who helped write the stories for previous *Toy Story* films, and Kenna Harris. The pair wanted to explore how technology has changed childhood, Harris told *The Week Junior.* "We're playing catch-up with contemporary kids and trying to reflect what their real lives have been like for a long time now," she said.

Toy Story characters have always been depicted as "flawed, funny, and relatable beings," Harris said. A mix of familiar and new voices is bringing them to life. Among the returning cast are Tom Hanks as Woody, Tim Allen as Buzz Lightyear, and Joan Cusack as Jessie. Latin music superstar Bad Bunny joined the voice cast as a new character, Pizza with Sunglasses, a forgotten toy living in a backyard shed. In 2020, the singer went viral after posting videos of himself with his own Woody and Buzz Lightyear toys.

Advances in technology since the last film allowed the creative team to try new animation techniques, Harris said. This time, for example, animators were able to have the toys spend more time outdoors interacting with animals. There are also scenes from Bonnie's point of view featuring colorful hand-drawn worlds and playful adventures.

With this new installment, the filmmakers hope audiences connect with the idea that imagination is always available. "You're not always going to have something you can click open and be entertained by," Harris said. "But your imagination is a superpower that rests inside you always—and brings us closer to our friends, to our toys, to our families."

Stars of the soundtrack

Taylor Swift

Legendary songwriter and pianist Randy Newman has composed the music for every *Toy Story* film, and he wrote and sang "You've Got a Friend in Me" from the first film. In 2011, he won the Academy Award for best original song for "We Belong Together" from *Toy Story 3*.

Now the franchise's music legacy is expanding. Pop star Taylor Swift has written an original song for *Toy Story 5* titled "I Knew It, I Knew You." It is a country song inspired by cowgirl Jessie's story. Swift, whose career began in country music, grew up as a *Toy Story* fan. "I've always dreamed of getting to write for these characters who I've adored since I was a 5-year-old kid," she wrote on social media.

Co-director Kenna Harris said Swift's song is "hopeful and celebratory" and told *The Week Junior*, "I can't wait for everyone to hear it."

DID YOU KNOW?
Former US President George W. Bush is an artist and has painted portraits of immigrants and military veterans.

Exhibit about American art history

Many museums across the US are celebrating the 250th anniversary of the nation this year. One of them, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, is hosting a show that is using art to examine history. *America 250: Common Threads*, which was created in partnership with the American Folk Art Museum in New York City, combines historic and modern paintings, textiles (above), photographs, toys, and other objects to showcase themes of identity, community, and civic life. It runs through July 27.

One important piece on display is an early engraving of the Declaration of Independence, signed in 1776. Visitors can also see souvenirs from the nation's centennial (100th anniversary) in 1876, as well as photographs capturing everyday life over the past century. Other works in the exhibition include portraits of the first US President, George Washington.

George Washington

Common Threads also features a quilting project designed by visual artist Basil Kincaid. More than 20,000 students from Arkansas contributed decorated fabric squares that share their feelings and memories about the US. Now local quilters and artists-in-residence are sewing 60,000 of the squares into a massive quilt, a process gallery visitors can observe.

"We wanted to show our guests that kids care about the politics and history of this moment," Larissa Randall and Ella Nowicki, curators (people who select art) of the exhibition, told *The Week Junior*. "The objects kids make today, like the quilt squares, can change how we see the world."

READER RECOMMENDS

Stray Kids: The dominATE Experience *(Hulu, Disney+, or rent on major platforms)*

"This is a concert movie about the K-pop boy band Stray Kids and their recent world tour. It includes performances of some of their songs, such as 'Cover Me' and 'Thunderous,' and shows the variety of their music. Some songs are powerful and loud, and others are calmer and about being who you are. The movie also has interviews with each of the eight members of the group. Watching the movie lets you see what it is like to be at a Stray Kids concert without having to buy a ticket." Sophia, 12, Utah

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

3 MORE PICKS TO ENJOY THIS WEEK

PLAY: A SHORT HIKE

Wilder, an 8-year-old reader of *The Week Junior*, recommends this nature adventure game. You play as a bird trying to reach the summit of a park mountain. Along the way, you can collect feathers that let you climb higher and glide farther; search for treasures; fish; and meet other animal hikers. (Nintendo Switch, PlayStation, Xbox, PC)

WATCH: AMERICAN NINJA WARRIOR

In this competition series, athletes run through obstacle courses that test their speed, strength, and agility. The new season adds a three-lane course where competitors race against two challengers at the same time. The ultimate champion wins a $250,000 prize. (NBC, Peacock)

LISTEN: TREASURE ISLAND 2020

The classic 1883 pirate adventure novel, *Treasure Island*, inspired this audio series, which is on the Imagination Amplified podcast. The reimagined story is set in modern times and follows a teen who discovers that a mysterious man is actually a time-traveling 18th-century pirate. (Major podcast platforms, GZM Shows app, and gzmshows.com)

COURTESY OF THE CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART (4); BLEECKER STREET; ADAM ROBINSON-YU; SCOTT EVERETT WHITE/NBC; GEN-Z MEDIA; ON LEFT PAGE: DISNEY/PIXAR (2); GETTY IMAGES

2026 Summer of Reading

THIS WEEK'S BOOK

The Second Life of Snap

By Erin Entrada Kelly

When Zuzu's father loses his job, he brings home a robot he received from his employer. The robot keeps tabs on 12-year-old Zuzu, teaches her school lessons, and does household chores. But it doesn't have a working charger. So once the robot's battery runs out, her dad plans to sell it for parts.

Zuzu is worried that the robot will tell her father she sneaks off with her friends to an old salvage yard, where they find discarded items to sell or use at home. Her tech-whiz friend Elias reprograms the robot, and much to her surprise, it becomes more like her friend.

She names the robot Snap (short for Secure Network Android Processor) and invites it to join her friends on their adventures. As Zuzu grows closer to Snap, she doesn't want the robot to run out of power, which would revert it to factory settings. Zuzu plans to power down Snap when its battery life is low and reboot it once she can afford a charger. But will a dangerous storm wreak havoc with her plan?

Set in a harsh imaginary future, this novel makes you think about big issues, like the loss of privacy and use of AI, while its friendship story tugs at your heart. *Ages 8–12*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB

If you were Elias, would you have reprogrammed the robot?

What do you think about robots? Are they helpful or harmful? Explain.

How does Snap's diminishing battery life help create tension within the story?

Were you surprised that the robots weren't programmed to read cursive handwriting?

How did the ending of the book make you feel?

If you read *The Wild Robot* or saw the movie, what are similarities and differences to this robot story?

Find your next great read

If you liked…

Rise of the School for Good and Evil

By Soman Chainani

In this prequel to *The School for Good and Evil*, twin headmasters train heroes and villains in separate schools. When a seemingly evil student gets placed in the School for Good, it drives a wedge between them. *Ages 10+*

You might like…

Welcome to Merlin Academy

By Melissa de la Cruz

In this prequel to the *Descendants* series, a young class of villains and heroes must figure out what happened to their headmaster who has suddenly disappeared. They need to act fast before time runs out. *Ages 8–12*

Guess the book this quote comes from

"It was about standing out instead of fitting in. Being bold and breaking new ground. That's what we'll be doing."

Hint: This book has the name of a famous detective in the title.

Answer: *The Sherlock Society* by James Ponti. Zoe attempts to motivate her brother Alex and friends to start a detective agency during summer break. The third book in this mystery series will be published in September.

AUTHOR AMBASSADOR

Erin Entrada Kelly

One of seven authors who have won two Newbery Medals, Erin Entrada Kelly received her first in 2018 for *Hello, Universe* and won again in 2025 for *The First State of Being*. She just released her first dystopian (broken world) novel, *The Second Life of Snap*. She is a Summer of Reading ambassador for *The Week Junior*.

What sparked the idea for this book?

I've always wanted to write a story about robots. I love R2-D2, BB-8, and Roz from the book *The Wild Robot*. I put the topic in the back of my mind waiting for the right story to come to me. It did in November 2023 when I had just been diagnosed with breast cancer and was very emotional. (My cancer is now in remission.) Ever since I was a child, I've used stories to soothe myself. I started imagining a robot with a limited battery life who befriends a girl.

Do you have any advice for aspiring young authors?

Just sit down and write. Don't worry about grammar, punctuation, and all those little school things that get drilled into your head. When you're writing for yourself creatively, those are the least important things for you to worry about. It's also not about finishing or being perfect. Simply focus on being creative.

Do you have a special place for your Newbery Medals?

I kept the Newbery I won in 2018 in a box until I received my second one last year. I bought little stands for them and put a backlight behind them.

What were your favorite books in middle and high school?

Judy Blume was my touchstone, and I also enjoyed Stephen King's books.

What theme of this book do you hope sticks with readers?

My hope is that readers realize that ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things when they work together.

Summer plans?

Reading in a floatie in my new backyard pool.

Reader recommends

Trouble at the Tangerine *By Gillian McDunn*

"This book is about Simon, a child with a cast and crutches. His family is always moving, and Simon gets to choose where they go for their next move. He picks Rigsby, a small town in the middle of nowhere. Simon makes a friend named Amaya, and they have to solve a crime. At the same time, weird things start happening. Also, Simon wants to find a home where he can stay. Will he find a forever home and solve the mystery? Well, I could tell you, or you could find out!" Abigail, 9, New York

Do you have a book to recommend? We want to hear about it! With an adult's help, please send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

3 new titles for Juneteenth

These books commemorate June 19, which became a federal holiday in 2021.

Curious About Juneteenth
By Dr. Artika Tyner
Packed with photos, facts, and infographics, this glossy book traces the history of the Juneteenth holiday, beginning with the first celebration of freedom from slavery in Galveston, Texas. It describes the various ways people celebrate the holiday around the world. You can also read about the Juneteenth flag. *Ages 7–10*

First Freedom: The Story of Opal Lee and Juneteenth
By Angélique Roché, illustrated by Alvin Epps, Millicent Monroe, and Bex Glendining
This graphic novel explores the life of teacher and activist Opal Lee, who championed the grassroots movement that made Juneteenth a federal holiday. At age 89, she walked 1,400 miles from Forth Worth, Texas, to Washington, DC, to spread awareness. *Ages 12+*

A Song for Juneteenth
By Zetta Elliott, illustrated by Noa Denmon
This lyrical picture book with exquisite illustrations celebrates Black children and assures them that they are deeply loved. It also provides a message for people who have struggled with injustice. The author's note explains the book's inspiration and the history of Juneteenth. *Ages 6–9*

Our annual list of "The 50 Books Kids Love Most" and more can be found at kids.theweekjunior.com/summerofreading.

2026 Summer of Reading

BOOKS: COURTESY THE PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: COURTESY OF ERIN ENTRADA KELLY; GETTY IMAGES

SPORTY SCULPTURES
Four 18-foot birdies are located on the lawn of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri.

Give badminton a try

Check out this fun, fast-paced game you can play nearly anywhere.

Badminton is one of the most popular sports in the world, played by more than 300 million people globally, with its popularity growing in the US. Here's how you can get in on the excitement.

Understand the game

Badminton is played one-on-one or two-on-two. Players use a long-handled racket with an oval-shaped head with tightly woven strings. It's like a tennis racket but much lighter weight. Instead of a ball, you hit a "shuttlecock," often called a birdie, over the net to your opponent, and they hit it back to you. You keep the volley going until one of you can't return the birdie–it may fall to the ground or go out of bounds, or you might accidentally hit the net with your racket. Those all result in a point for your opponent. You play the game until one of you reaches 21 points.

Bye-bye, birdie!

Build confidence and coordination

Badminton experts say the game increases hand-eye coordination and builds your ability to stay focused. When you're first learning, don't worry too much about the rules as long as you're getting practice. For example, if playing to 21 points feels too long, modify the points down to 15 or even 11 per game. "What's great about badminton is that new players show improvement pretty quickly," said Jason Simone, physical education teacher at William E. Cottle Elementary School in Eastchester, New York. "Once kids start getting a few volleys back and forth over the net, you hear all the 'Ooh!' and 'Oh!' moments, and their confidence really starts to grow."

Commit to practicing

Some local recreation centers host open play sessions for badminton. Contact your rec center to find out. If your center doesn't have dedicated badminton time, ask if they could add it to their schedule or if you could reserve an hour in the gym or on the tennis court to play with a partner two to three times a week.

Enjoy it all summer and beyond

Badminton is considered a lifetime game, which means that once you learn, you can keep playing as you get older. People gravitate toward it because it's not intimidating. So don't be surprised if everyone from your college-age cousin to your great-aunt wants to play with you. A bonus: Playing with more experienced players will help make you a stronger player too!

History of a sport

The game of badminton has origins as far back as 200 BCE in ancient China, Greece, and India. In the mid-1800s, British officers brought it to England from India. The Duke of Beaufort played it on the grounds of his home, called Badminton House, and that's how the game got its name.

Badminton made its debut at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, Germany, as a demonstration sport. It was officially made an Olympic sport at the 1992 Games in Barcelona, Spain. It will be played at the Galen Center on the campus of the University of Southern California at the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 2028.

FACT FILE
In Denmark, the word for a cheese danish is *wienerbrød*, which means "Viennese bread."

WARNING!
Ask an adult's permission before using the oven.

Bake up cheese-filled Danish pastries

Ingredients

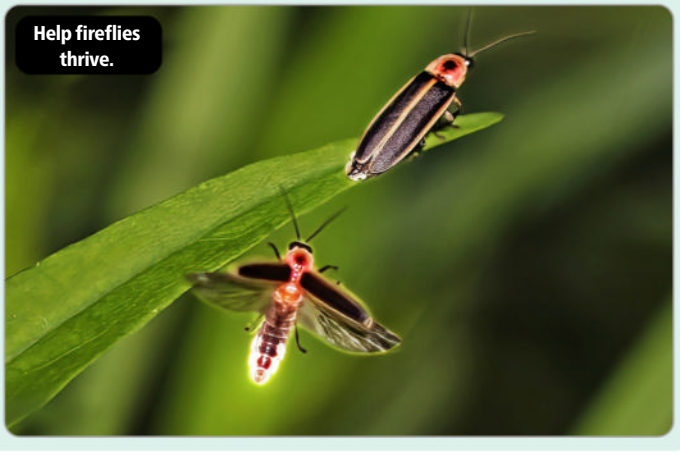
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 egg whisked with 1 tablespoon water, plus 1 egg yolk
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- Kosher salt
- 1 (14- to 17-ounce) package frozen puff pastry, thawed
- ¾ cup powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon whole milk

Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 400° F and line two baking sheets with parchment paper. In a medium bowl, stir together the cream cheese, 2 teaspoons lemon juice, ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract, the egg yolk, granulated sugar, and a pinch of salt until smooth and creamy. Set aside.
2. Cut each puff pastry sheet into six equal rectangles (a pizza cutter works well for this task) and place them about an inch apart on the prepared baking sheets. Use the tip of a paring knife to score a smaller rectangle inside each pastry rectangle, leaving a ½-inch border.
3. Top the center of each pastry with a generous tablespoon of cream cheese filling, spreading it evenly and taking care not to go over the scored lines. Brush the edges of each pastry with the egg wash. Bake pastries until golden and puffy, about 12 to 15 minutes.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together 1 teaspoon lemon juice and the remaining ¼ teaspoon vanilla with the powdered sugar and milk. Drizzle the glaze over the baked pastries. Serve warm or at room temperature (they can remain on the baking sheets to cool). Makes 12 pastries.

ECO TIP OF THE WEEK
TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT FIREFLIES

Fireflies, also known as lightning bugs, live in every US state except Hawaii. They are predominantly found in the eastern and southeastern parts of the country, and some smaller, scattered, populations can be found in the West. Fireflies are under threat throughout the US for several reasons, including habitat loss and light pollution. Fireflies flash their lights to attract a mate, so you can help them by turning off outdoor lights in the evening or switching to motion-sensored lights. Talk to your family about that, as well as solutions for insect control—like planting basil or marigolds—that don't involve pesticides that can kill fireflies.



Help fireflies thrive.

JOY HOWARD; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Word search

Can you find all these words associated with a magic show? They are hidden horizontally, vertically, or diagonally and can be forward or backward. When you're done, read the remaining letters to get a bonus message.

ABRACADABRA
ALAKAZAM
BIRDCAGE
CAPE
CARDS
COINS
CUPS
CURTAIN
DOVES
LEVITATION
POOF
PRESTO
RABBIT
RINGS
ROPE
SCARF
SLEEVE
SLEIGHT OF HAND
TOP HAT
TRAPDOOR
TRICKS
VANISH
VOILA
WAND

				A	U	R	S			E	O	S	C	A	R	F
			N	I	A	T	R	U	C	C	I	D	N	K	L	T
		H	E	B	T	S	T	V	A	C	T	D	T	U	S	A
			B	B	A	R	B	A	D	A	C	A	R	B	A	
		E	I	O	F	A	C	F	L	I	N	T	R	B		
		T	R	T	O	P	H	A	T	P	E	I	R	D	V	
	R		T	D	Y	O	D	T	O	P	V	R	V	S	O	S
A	O	I	N	C	I	P	O	D	O	V	E	S	E	I	H	
S	P	D	N	A	H	F	O	T	H	G	I	E	L	S		
	E		H	G	O	N	R	L	I			A	V	E	T	
				E	S	L	E	E	V	E				T	V	O

A														M
A	G											C	I	
M	C	I									A	U	N	
	A	O									N	P		
	T	Z									C	S		
		R	A	N										
	E	N	I	K	C	W								

FOUR IN A ROW

Place four of the letters below to complete the first pair of words, in the same order in both words. Use the remaining four letters to complete the second pair of words, in the same order in both words.

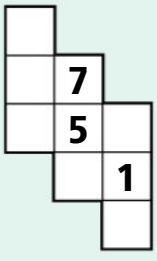
A C H M N O R U

T _ _ _ B _ A I L
_ _ _ A _

H _ _ M _ N I _ A
_ P P _ _ A _ H

Out of order

The numbers 1 to 9 can fit, one per square, so that no two consecutive numbers are in squares that touch in any way, even at a corner. Use the numbers already given to figure out where the rest of the numbers go.



Fill in the blanks

Fill in the blanks in each sentence with words that are the same except for a different last letter, like CHAIR and CHAIN. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

1. Before we put our dishes into the dishwasher each night, we use a fork to _ _ _ _ _ _ off all the little _ _ _ _ _ _ of food.

2. I knew my mother was a hard worker, but I wasn't _ _ _ _ _ that she was given an _ _ _ _ _ for being the most productive employee of the month.

3. My father used to read me a bedtime _ _ _ _ _ about a _ _ _ _ _ that raced to _ _ _ _ _ all her eggs in a secluded spot just as a terrible _ _ _ _ _ swept in.

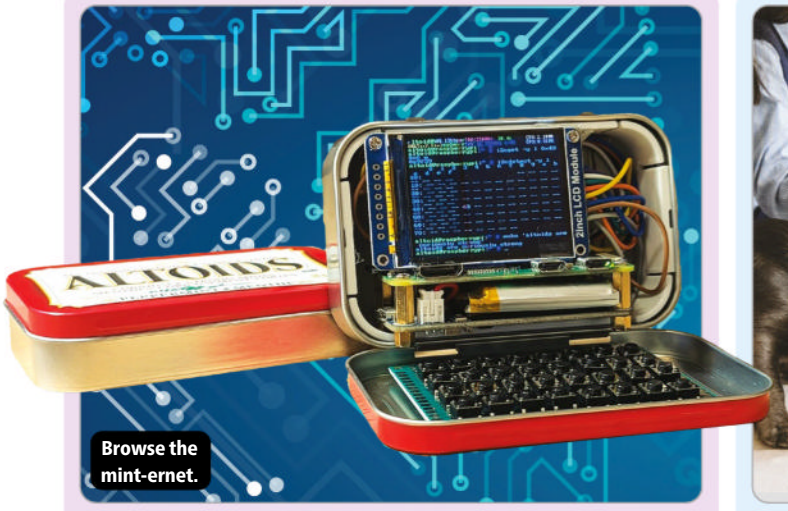
ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Spot the difference

These two pictures of a boy feeding chickens appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Fill in the blanks hint: Both words in sentence 2 begin with A.



Browse the mint-ernet.

Tiny laptop in mint condition

As technology advances, companies are making laptops smaller and smaller. A YouTuber named Exercising Ingenuity has taken this a step further by building a fully functional laptop inside an Altoids tin, which usually holds mints. He used a 3D printer to make a frame for the device, then squeezed in a tiny computer called a Raspberry Pi, a small screen, and a miniature keyboard that he built himself. Even though using the keyboard is tricky, he says the mini computer works perfectly.

Chowing down in style

Dining for four-legged foodies

A fine-dining restaurant for dogs recently opened in France. The restaurant, called Dogstronomy, offers a dog-friendly menu including meat-filled cakes and fish-flavored ice cream. Owner Ornella Del Prado started out by making delicious dishes for her own pup, Loki, and the meals became so popular that she decided to open a restaurant. She said she wants pets to have a "real restaurant experience." During the meals, however, owners have to keep an eye on their dogs to make sure they don't steal each other's food.

Tee-rific!

An un-fore-gettable record

Golf fans in Texas built a masterful structure that broke the world record for the largest golf ball pyramid ever assembled. The group stacked about 19,019 golf balls in 38 rows to create the angular shape. To claim the record, they were not allowed to use glue or other adhesives to hold the round objects in place. Instead, they built the pyramid on top of a special wooden platform that kept the balls steady. The record-breaking structure took the title from the previous champion, which contained 17,575 balls.

Can you move in and lift off?

A house that can float sky-high

Talk about a room with a view! If you've ever dreamed of living high in the sky, now is your chance. Architects in California have designed an all-weather hot-air balloon that carries a tiny house complete with electricity and plumbing. They say there are a few limitations to living in a large balloon, such as ensuring that there's enough propane to power it for extended periods, so the homeowner will have to land on the ground frequently and refuel. Is this story true, or are we full of hot air?*

*Fake! There is no hot-air house floating in the sky, but a balloon-based home is for sale in Los Angeles. The "bubble house" was built in 1946 by covering a giant inflatable form with concrete and turning it into a dome-shaped home.

EXERCISING INGENUITY; ADOBE STOCK; CHLOE LAPEYSSONNIE/HEARTS OF DOGS; GUINESS WORLD RECORDS; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

Editor's note

It's an exciting time in the athletic world! In this week's Sports section, we have stories on the winners of the NCAA Women's College World Series softball competition (p18) and the French Open tennis tournament (p19). We also have a news story about the FIFA World Cup, the international soccer competition that takes place every four years and is being hosted by Mexico, Canada, and the US this year (p2). When *The Week Junior* went to press on June 10, matches were set to start the next day. It has been 32 years since the US hosted this event, and excitement has been building around the country. Our coverage will continue throughout the tournament, which ends on July 19. What teams are you looking forward to watching? Who do you think will win? If you attend a match or a watch party, we'd love to know! Send a photo and a quote to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

Family Promise

The goal of this organization is to support families experiencing homelessness in the US. Since the 1980s, it has offered emergency shelters, childcare support, job coaching, and transportation to those in need. It also helps families find permanent housing, safe sleeping locations, and meals. Currently, the group operates in more than 200 locations in 43 states. Find out more at familypromise.org.

FamilyPromise

Selling lemonade to help kids

"I hosted an Alex's Lemonade Stand, and I had so much fun helping others. I felt proud that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference. I was able to raise $305, which has been donated to the Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation for cancer research. I was involved in every single step of it. I am already excited to do this again next year. In addition, during the week of my birthday, I decided to donate my hair to support cancer survivors."

Rukmini, 7, Virginia

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK
What has two arms but no hands?
A sweater

Join our celebration of America's 250th!

At *The Week Junior*, we're gearing up to mark the 250th anniversary of America. We're inviting our readers to celebrate with us! To highlight the many places and people that make up the fabric of our nation, please send us a photo of yourself taken in front of a special spot in your hometown, such as a school, park, statue, or memorial. Ask an adult to email your photo to *hello@theweekjunior.com* with a description of where it was taken and My Hometown in the subject line. We'll feature some of the submissions on this page later this year.

THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"I was excited to see *The Week Junior* had a turtle on the cover because I have a turtle too! It's a red-eared slider." Ayden, 9, New Jersey

"My mom and I like ramen. We made it, and it was delicious." Isabelle, 8, California

"I really liked the Real or Fake article in Issue 316 about a UK phone booth. I went to London last year and got to see the red phone booths in person." Rhett, 8, Ohio

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Jaycee McCarthy**

School Name: **PS 452**

"Mr. McCarthy is kind, helpful, patient, funny, and smart. He takes the time to help students when they are confused, and never gives up on them. Mr. McCarthy encourages everyone to try their best and believe in themselves. He gives good advice about school and life that students can use in the future. Most important, Mr. McCarthy cares about every student and wants them to succeed. I'm so lucky to be his student."

Jayden, 10, New York

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

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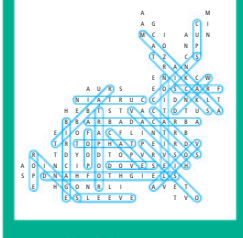
Puzzle answers (from page 26)

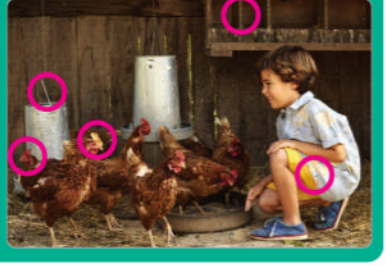


Unused letters: A magician once caused the Statue of Liberty to vanish on live TV.

Four in a row
thumbnail, human
harmonica, approach

Fill in the blanks
1. scrape, scraps
2. aware, award
3. story, stork, store, storm

4						
9	7					
2	5	3				
		8	1			
			6			



Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** b) Jessie **2** False. It found that yawning may be healthy. **3** b) Andes **4** Galveston **5** a) Teagan Kavan **6** True **7** c) *Pooch on the Loose* **8** Mars **9** b) 1980 **10** False. She is the youngest since 1992. **11** *America 250: Common Threads* **12** c) Violin **13** True **14** a) Ghost pipefish **15** Dogstronomy

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 Who is the leader of the group of toys in the new film *Toy Story 5*?

a) Lilypad b) Jessie c) Woody

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 True or false? A recent study found that yawning may be unhealthy for people's brains.

True ☐ False ☐

3 A rare version of the Oncilla wildcat was recently seen in what mountain range for the first time?

a) Adirondack b) Andes c) Appalachian

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4 Juneteenth marks the day in 1865 when US troops announced the end of slavery in what Texas city?

3

4

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

1

5 Which softball player was named the Most Outstanding Player of the Women's College World Series?

a) Teagan Kavan b) Katie Stewart

c) Ashton Maloney

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 True or false? Deb Haaland was the first Native American person to serve as a secretary in the US Cabinet.

True ☐ False ☐

7 What is the title of the first book in Goldie Hawn's *The After-School Kindness Crew* series?

a) *Slam Dunk Day* b) *Mindful Matters*

c) *Pooch on the Loose*

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

8 NASA's MAVEN spacecraft spent more than 11 years orbiting what planet?

10

11

9 When did the most famous eruption of the Mount St. Helens volcano take place?

a) 1970

b) 1980

c) 1990

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

10 True or false? Mirra Andreeva is the youngest women's singles winner at the French Open since 2002.

True ☐ False ☐

11 What is the title of the exhibit that uses art to examine history at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art?

12 Robotic exoskeletons were recently used to help pairs of musicians play what instrument together?

a) Guitar b) Piano

c) Violin

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 True or false? Erin Entrada Kelly is one of seven authors who have won two Newbery Medals.

True ☐ False ☐

14 What type of sea creature is the newly identified species Solenostomus snuffleupagus?

a) Ghost pipefish

b) Jellyfish

c) Seahorse

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

15 What is the name of the new fine dining restaurant for dogs that recently opened in France?

THE WEEK Junior

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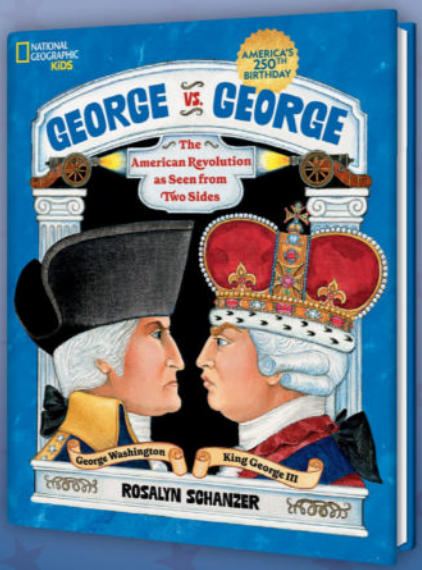

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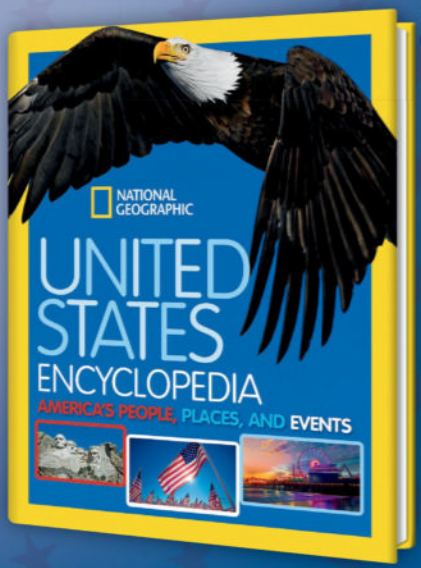

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